

January 28, 2004 Remarks from Scott S. Abdon, Senior Recreation Specialist
BLM's National Recreation Group, Washington, D.C.

THE FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT
and
It's Relevance to the BLM Director's National Recreation Forum

Alexis Park Resort and Spa
Las Vegas, Nevada

January 27-30, 2004

Some years ago, while watching a NOVA broadcast featuring the worldwide implications of global warming, the program narrator made an interesting observation. It pertained to our collective governmental and scientific wish for long-term solutions to this ever-growing earthly condition. In the broadcast's closing segment, the narrator summarized the key issues needing to be addressed, and touched upon the enormous difficulties which need to be overcome when implementing the "fixes" wished for by practically everyone. And, with all of the finger pointing at the world's Superpowers to do something about it, the narrator summed up by saying that "...a powerful government can only do so much" and then he said *"...and besides, the Genie's not the problem -- it's what we ask it to do."*

So, as we sit here together, rubbing gently the side of our Forum's "magic lamp" and waiting for the tell-tale curl of wispy smoke to answer our collective wish for transforming information and ideas received from many individual perspectives to some future set of actions, it is important to remind ourselves that **this Forum is not the problem -- it's what we ask it to do.**

At a meeting last week, Director Clarke asked me to relay to you her commitment to maintain the integrity of the Forum's process and her desire to interact with each of you in the spirit of regulatory compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act -- lovingly shortened to the acronym "FACA." Toward that end, Kathleen hopes that no offense is taken, either individually or as an assemblage, when she

asks that during the course of the Forum's proceedings this week, everyone be mindful of what the BLM may do and what the BLM may not do in order to remain compliant with the law and current FACA regulation associated with Federal Advisory Committee Management as administered by the General Services Administration.

You are, as individuals, participating in an "information exchange forum" hosted by the BLM Director. As such, this Forum is not covered by FACA, but it is extremely important to remember that:

the BLM may

- meet with a number of persons collectively to obtain their individual views
- listen to individuals' opinions and their sharing of information
- obtain advice from representatives of various existing organizations where each representative individually provides advice on behalf of that person's organization
- bring the discussion back to the original format of the meeting, i.e., individual advice, if it appears that the audience is achieving consensus or a common point of view

the BLM may not

- solicit consensus or a common point of view from the assemblage of individuals
- receive advice or recommendations from the assemblage "as a group"

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In closing, the Director has asked me:

- to float through the breakout sessions;
- to listen intently to the discussions; and
- to remind participants if/when we have crossed the line between staying in compliance and falling outside the regulatory sideboards which govern our information exchange.

So, with this said -- Kevin?